

Thy Sweetest Comforts Borrow

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Thy Sweetest Comforts Borrow

by [daraoakwise](#)

Summary

A young AOS Scotty is considering his options when Corry reappears and shows him the possibilities are far more than he ever dared hope.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

- Inspired by [Now and Later](#) by [SLWalker](#)

The air of Cambridge seemed to be teasing the idea of summer. There was a rising warmth, a promise of more on the horizon, that Glasgow never got. In the distance, something that he'd been told was a species of frog was singing, echoing down the Charles River. The air was heavy, humid, reaching through the gaps of his mostly-unzipped jacket. It made him shiver, but not with the cold.

He idly calculated the gross speed of the Earth as he walked. The planet's rotation at this latitude, Earth's speed around the sun, the solar system around Sagittarius A, the expansion of the universe ... he was about halfway through the computation when his brain shrugged and settled on 'really damn fast,' because he didn't particularly feel like knowing how quickly he was going nowhere at all.

He'd just spent three days at MIT's annual physics conference. An important one; ostensibly an interesting one, except he already knew everything that was talked about. He was twitchy, overtouched from hands on his shoulders, people reaching for him, passing him around. 'You should meet our young Dr. Scott. We stole him from Edinburgh!' Their too-loud laughter had set him on edge, and he'd stopped bothering with a fake smile half a day in. He was a savant; no one expected a smile out of a savant anyway.

Tonight, at the evening mixer, he found himself abruptly disgusted by all of them. Doctors and Professors and Deans, demanding things of him, even when booze dropped their filters and he could feel their jealous, bitter sneers between his shoulder blades.

Some of his professors from Edinburgh had been here for the conference, and they whispered: 'Do you think he's looking better? Such a *shame*, about his health, he had a breakdown, had you *heard*...?' As if those bastards hadn't been giving drugs and drink to a *boy*, as if they hadn't been driving him straight toward madness and despair instead of *watching out for a child*.

There was a baby savant here at MIT. She was just getting started; fourteen and a half. He had cornered her parents last week and begged them: for god's sake, bring her *home* for the summer. They'd nodded, eyeing him with pity, and he had a bad feeling she wasn't going anywhere. He'd knocked some hands off her shoulders tonight, considered breaking the fingers trailing possessively across her body.

He had a single ally for that child in a professor from the astronomy department, a grandmother-type who had walked a road similar to his own. He'd vetted her, hard, with his own instincts with the word of the undergrads who adored her. He trusted her, and sighed in relief when she gathered up that overwhelmed girl. "Go home, Scotty," she whispered to him on the way by. It hadn't occurred to him—he could *leave*. He did.

(He'd been kissed by a professor, once. After hours, in an office behind closed doors, a line of white powder burning his nose and brain. Kissed once, breath like booze and gingivitis, a tongue against his own, a hand on his hip, then lower, fingers under the band of his trousers. He'd been just shy of sixteen, and there was a blank space in his mind between being kissed and time returning the next day. But the professor had a black eye for a week and never spoke to him again.)

It occurred to him that that was *entirely fucked up*. It occurred to him that that had been just barely more than two years ago. It occurred to him that he should have said something. It occurred to him that you couldn't expect that of a child. It occurred to him that it was about the same

time he'd started to notice, with abject terror, that his mind was coming apart.)

So here he was walking through the twilight on a planet that would tumble through the universe for the rest of its existence, until the day it was entirely consumed by the same star that was trailing evening light across his back. He couldn't tell whether that was maudlin or hopeful.

There was something wrong with him, tonight, and getting worse. Had he taken his meds today? He was shaky with ... hunger? (shit, he forgot to eat today and maybe yesterday) but felt like he was going to puke. Had he had a drink tonight? Something stronger? (god, surely not, he knew better.) There had been hands on his skin, and that little girl's. The memory of an unwelcome tongue in his mouth. Booze, and cruel laughter, and resentment pitched as pity, and tumbling through space at ... 836 klicks a second, his brain supplied, having finished the arithmetic even if he didn't want it to. More than seventy-two million kilometers spent falling through space at this wasted three-day conference. That's exactly how fast he was going nowhere at all.

"Scotty!" called a cheerful voice, stopping him in his tracks.

"Corry," he breathed in wonder, turning toward the blazing light of the man. And he abruptly remembered the ridiculous blue t-shirt he was wearing under his suit coat, proclaiming 'Maine' under a rainbow of five dancing lobsters. It made him happy because it was entirely stupid, and because Corry bought it for him. He remembered a broad chest under his cheek, rising and falling while he slept in the back of a skimmer. He remembered lobster rolls and laughter, and he stopped falling.

"Corry, what the hell are you doing here?" he asked. "You're meant tae be in San Francisco!"

Cor shrugged. "Wanted to come home for the weekend."

"Right. Well, this is Massachusetts. You're a bit south yet," Scott said, trying to sound teasing and *not desperate*. Because Scotty had spent a beautiful, entirely unexpected week in Maine with Corry and his family, about an hour after he met the man. He'd decided, after chewing over it obsessively, that it must have been some quirk of North American hospitality, a fit of Mainiac protectiveness for half-drowned wanderers. With that solved, he'd resigned himself to never seeing Corry again.

And yet, there he stood.

Cor just put his hands in his pockets and looked at him with a half smile. "You doing anything this weekend?" he asked.

And—yes, there were some conference-adjacent meetings he was supposed to be at, but fuck it. "Yeh have anything in mind?"

"Come up to Maine, and we'll see what develops?" Cor half-asked with a shrug, gesturing toward his yellow skimmer with his chin.

"Hell, yes," Scotty said. Corry could have suggested anything, and that would have been his answer.

Corry walked with him the half block to his flat so he could grab a weekend bag, chatting easily at him while Scotty's brain was seized in idle.

"Wait a sec," Corry said, and put a hand on his back, and it made Scotty shudder at the heat between his shoulder blades. "Right," Corry sighed, and then Corry's arms were around him, holding him chest-to-chest with an aching, tight kind of hug. "If you really want to get away I'll let you go," Cor murmured. "But if you can bear it, give it a second. Mom calls it a heartbeat hug."

And, *god*, Scotty thought he was entirely touched out. Too many hands had been all over him all week, but then his breathing synced with Corry's and something uncoiled under his ribs. The world, which had gone fuzzy, resolved in detail again.

"I think you might actually be here," Scotty whispered, clutching the back of Corry's jacket.

Corry pulled back a little to look him in the eye. "You doubted?"

"I hoped," Scotty admitted. "But that's when my mind lies tae me the most often."

Corry leaned into him. "I've got to get you out of here. Throw some stuff in a bag. We'll stop somewhere to get chips and candy and convenience store burritos."

Scotty's flat was nothing much to him. A place to sleep, eat, and work. A very nice set of kitchen knives and a handmade quilt on the bed were about his only concession to personalization. The rest he'd largely purchased when he got here.

The clothing in his closet was newer stuff that fit but didn't necessarily match; the older things had his grandmother's influence but were too small on a growing body that was abruptly getting its second wind after six months in a mental hospital. Trousers were suddenly above his ankles and shirts above his wrists; jackets too tight across his shoulders. He'd been pleased to discover that two days without shaving gave him a respectable stubble, although a week still resulted in a mostly-patchy beard.

He tossed an extra set of trousers and shirt in a duffle, pants and socks, some shorts to sleep in, his travel toiletry kit. He sighed and picked up the hypo of powerful psych meds that kept him mostly even, and enough extra vials to get him through the weekend. He swung through the kitchen and grabbed a teacup and saucer and wrapped them in a shirt, because he'd be damned if he was going to drink tea out of a lobster mug again.

Cor had been watching him fondly, and put an arm over his shoulder, and they escaped.

He *woke up*, somewhere, not even aware he'd fallen asleep. He was still belted into the passenger seat of the skimmer, head pressed between the headrest and the window, the remains of their travel snacks in his lap. "I swear tae god," Scotty said softly into the dark. "I dinnae find you boring. You're just entirely safe."

"That may be the highest compliment anyone has ever paid me," Corry said, and turned off the skimmer, the electronics humming as they powered down. "I picked up some real food and beer while you were asleep. Come sit on the beach in the dark with me."

It was cool in the dark, but not cold, summer starting to promise in Maine as well. They must be in South Bristol, because there was a pile of familiar lobster rolls and, as promised, a few bottles of beer. Corry spread out a blanket that apparently lived in the back of the skimmer, up against a stone seawall that supported the road above. It was a good backrest, and still held some the heat of the day. They sat side by side, shoulders and elbows and knees touching. The light from a full moon was enough to see by, and Corry watched him inhale about half the food with a fond smile.

And they chatted idly, for a while, about Starfleet and Corry's adventures there. And then Corry asked about MIT, and Scotty considered lying, but found he couldn't, not to Corry.

"I just sat through what was supposed to be the most important physics conference of the year. And I could only think about two things." He rolled his bottle of beer between his palms, elbows on his knees, and considered his words. "I've been in a negotiation with myself for the last year on stayin' alive," he admitted into the darkness. "Some days it isnae a question. Other days I struggle tae see the point. Which probably means I should be in hospital again, but brings me back tae the original issue: what the hell is the point of that life?" he sighed. "I cannae imagine livin' this life I'm living just another year. Much less ten or forty or a hundred. So I thought about that. And ..." he trailed off.

"And?" Cor prompted gently, taking another sip of his drink.

Scotty breathed deeply. "I thought about bein' in the back of a skimmer. Sleeping my best sleep in weeks, leaning on your chest. Listenin' tae your heartbeat," he glanced over at Cor. "Drooling on your coat," he finished, because he figured his confession was too much.

"I think about it too," Corry whispered.

"Me drooling on your coat?" Scott asked.

"Ayuh, your drool. *No*, idiot. Watching you sleep. Listening to you breathe. Wanting ..." he trailed off, and Scotty glanced at him, and then Cor leaned forward and kissed him.

It was sweet and tender, almost chaste; other than the way their fingers were desperately clinging to each other's coats. Cor let go of him, then reached up to cup his face, tracing it with his thumbs.

And then he moved, and Scotty had a big, blonde, *gorgeous* Mainiac straddling his lap, his knees on the other side of Scotty's hips. And there was exactly *nothing* chaste about that kiss. Or Corry's hands—warm, big hands—at the fastener of Scotty's trousers, and then his own.

"Is this okay?" Corry murmured into his mouth, and Scotty's head was spinning too much to answer, but he half-tugged Corry's trousers over his hips and wrapped his hands around his arse.

They ended up back in the skimmer, because Corry insisted that sex anywhere near sand was awful, and Scotty was willing to bow to his experience. And if they spent the next hour making each other feel good, well—it felt really, *really* fucking good, even when the tight space in the back of the skimmer made for laughter and *interesting* positioning.

It was dark, and the windows were fogged over, and the air on their bodies was cooling rapidly. The folded-down space was meant for cargo, not cuddling, but they were managing it. His head was on Corry's shoulder, both of them drifting sleepily.

He was entirely warm in all the places Corry was touching him, but cold everywhere else, and Scotty shivered. Cor leaned in and kissed his lips, then crawled over the front seat, his bare arse waving in the air.

Corry caught him looking and winked at him. "Like the view?" he asked.

"Spectacular view," Scotty said. "Making plans tae see more of it. From up very close, as soon as possible."

Corry smiled even more broadly, and made a fairly lewd show of starting the skimmer and the heat, before he collected their coats to tuck around them as he settled in beside him again.

"Next time I'm grabbing a camping mat and a quilt," he grumbled.

"Next time we find a *bed*," Scotty insisted, and then kissed his way down Corry's neck and shoulder. Corry turned his head and caught his lips again for a slow, indulgent kiss before breaking off with a sigh.

"I had two ulterior motives for coming and getting you. First, I *wanted* to, okay? Second, I casually mentioned at the Academy that I'd met you, and was invited to lunch by no fewer than *four* different Admirals, all asking variations of the same question: 'do you think he'd be interested in joining Starfleet?' I mentioned that you had some health concerns and their answer was that anything could be waived." He dropped his hand to the center of Scotty's chest, rubbing lightly there. "I wasn't even going to bring it up but ... if you can't imagine continuing the life you're living, then don't give up on it—*change it*, Scotty. Corry's voice was thick, affected, a little angry, on the edge of tears. Like he gave a damn if Scotty *continued*, if he was *happy*."

"Oh, I've got the rest of my life planned," Scotty said. "I'm your plaything in the back of this skimmer now."

"That sounds like a reasonable life goal," Corry laughed, and pulled Scotty closer, between his legs, and settled him against his chest.

“Seriously, though, Scotty ...”

“I dinnae ken about Starfleet. But after tonight I cannae go back tae what I was doing before. I willnae, alright? I’ll think about it.” He turned to look at Corry in the dark and for the first time in forever there were *possibilities* in front of him. Maybe it was Starfleet. Maybe it was turning wrenches in a garage in South Bristol or Glasgow, or wherever Corry wanted to live. He knew with utter certainty that he wasn’t going back to Cambridge, not at the end of the weekend or ever, and he leaned in and kissed Cor. “I’ll think about it later,” he promised again. “Right now my brain is focused on a very serious mathematical question: how many times can I get yeh tae moan my name before dawn?”

(He lost count, because Corry wouldn’t stop saying it, though Cor did keep a teasing count of how many times Scotty whispered *his*, giddy with something he would know later was *love*, but also, perhaps, *hope*.)

Later, much later, Scotty would admit to Corry that that was the day when he started counting his joyful days, until he lost count of those too.

End Notes

Title from John Keats’s ‘To Hope,’ written when he was nineteen.

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